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**Onscreen user documentation**

1. **What is the nature of onscreen user documentation?**

Information used to provide a guide for users. It is designed to be viewed on the screen of a computer or other electronic device. It explains how to use a product or how to be viewed on the screen of a computer.

1. **List the 3 functions of onscreen user documentation?**
2. A user may refer to onscreen user documentation for instructions on accessing and using features of new programs or devices
3. Users in workplaces may refer to in-house onscreen user documentation for information on company procedures and policies.
4. If a problem occurs while using a product, the user may refer to a help file or an onscreen instruction manual to find a solution.

**Types of onscreen user documentation:**

1. **User guides and instruction manuals**
   1. **What are the purpose of these guides?**

To inform the user about the characteristics, capabilities and functions of the hardware or software. They will detail how to start using the product and how to perform typical actions with the product.

* 1. **What are the two popular formats for onscreen user guides? Why?**

**Portable document format (PDF)** and **hypertext (browser-based).** Both of which can be used on different platforms or operations systems (cross-platform software).

* 1. **What is a third party user guide?**

A different organisation from the original manufacturer of a product. The ‘third party’ may provide support or add-ons for a product, which they then sell for profit.

**Describe the characteristics of the following types of onscreen user documentation.**

1. **Quick start guides**

Provided with an application or device for first-time or inexperienced users of the product, giving simple instructions on how to begin using the product, safe usage, saving files, etc.

1. **In-house user documentation**

User guides and instruction manuals enable the employees or clients of the organisation to use an information system. May include in-house protocols for the particular organisation, file-naming protocols, etc.

1. **Read me files**

Provided by the manufacture to go along with hardware or software. They contain information such as: system requirements, config settings, troubleshooting strategies, etc.

1. **Tutorials**

Step-by-step instructions for using the features and functions of a software program or hardware device. May include: text and graphics (screen dumps/shots, multimedia files, video, etc). Can be created by third party organisations for profit.

1. **Help files**

Provide searchable information about features of software. Provide an overview of different topics as well as detailed tutorials.

1. **Web support**

Onscreen documentation for software and hardware that is available from the manufactures website. Usually a hyperlink to the site from within the software application. Quite often will have a FAQ section and a patch download section.

1. **Tool tips & hint boxes**

Provide content sensative help for the user.

Tool tips – Within a software application, holding the cursor over an icon may highlight a text box with the name or a function of the icon.

Hint Box – Within a software application, clicking on an icon may open a hint box with a short description of the function of the icon and possibly a related graphic.